

Appendix N
GUIDE FOR MEDIA INTERVIEWS

GUIDELINES

1. Considerations

- a. When human safety or other serious concerns are involved, deal with those considerations first.
- b. Communicate only information that is approved for external distribution. Always tell the truth.
- c. Know to whom you are speaking. Get the person's name and telephone number, if necessary.
- d. Do not be intimidated. You may tell a reporter that you need to clarify an important matter before you can answer questions.
- e. Talk from the public's viewpoint. Avoid jargon. Speak within the audience's frame or reference.
- f. If the questions do not lie within the framework of approved statements or within your area of expertise, find the appropriate technical advisor or spokesperson.
- g. State the most important fact at the beginning. Place your own headline on the answer.
- h. Attack problems in your answers, not people.
- i. Do not repeat offensive or negative language. Do not let other people put words in your mouth.
- j. Direct questions deserve equally direct and forthright answers.
- k. Do not exaggerate the facts. Listen to how your answer "sounds" when spoken.
- l. Ignore cameras and microphones. Talk to the reporter.
- m. During videotaped interviews, it is all right to stop your statement and start over.
- n. Do not say "no comment." Explain why you do not have an immediate answer.
- o. Keep your composure, even if a news reporter gets snappy.
- p. Be prepared to provide sufficient evidence for statements you make.
- q. Be especially alert about photos. You have little control over photos taken off military reservation property, but you have every right to control photos taken on the military reservation.
- r. Be aware of your surroundings and follow local OPSEC rules when determining interview location

2. What will be asked?

- a. What happened and where? When did this occur

- b. Are there injuries or deaths as a result? How many and to whom?
- c. What actions is the unit taking to control the situation?
- d. Have chemicals or other hazardous substances been released into the environment? What kinds? How much?
- e. What types of hazards are presented to people off-site?
- f. Have off-site emergency response personnel been notified? Which ones?
- g. Are unit operations shut down?
- h. Has the site or facility been evacuated?
- i. How many people are employed at this site?
- j. What do you do at this site?
- k. How old is the facility? Does it meet current regulations?
- l. Why did this situation occur? (DO NOT SPECULATE.)
- m. Are there safety rules covering the situation? Were they violated?
- n. Has a Site Emergency Response Plan been activated? What does that involve?
- o. Tell me about your organization?
- p. Will this situation have national ramifications, or will its effect likely be limited to a single site or region?
- q. How much money is this going to cost the taxpayers?
- r. Is there insurance coverage for the loss or damage? How much?
- s. Are commanders handling the situation locally or is a higher headquarters taking control?
- t. Has this occurred anywhere within the unit before? Why weren't you ready?
- u. What do your soldiers think about this situation?
- v. For accidents and incidents, don't speculate causes. Use "ongoing" investigation statements.